

February 20, 2023

Testimony submitted by: Representative Moira Rader

In support of:

SB 1046. AN ACT CONCERNING THE REDUCTION OF FOOD WASTE IN SCHOOLS: To reduce the amount of food waste in schools by including school districts among the entities responsible for the composting of source-separated organic material and permitting schools to establish composting stations in cafeterias.

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Dear Chairs Linehan and Maher, Vice Chairs Keitt and Kushner, Ranking Members Dauphinais and Seminara, and my esteemed colleagues of the Committee on Children,

I submit this testimony to express my strong support for this proposed legislation. I believe that the future success of our students requires that they develop the skills and empathy to be impactful stewards of our planet. Their education can only be made stronger by instilling in them an awareness of their impact on the environment and empowering them to be part of actionable efforts to reduce that impact. This legislation, while rooted in an environmental initiative, serves to engage our children in an incredibly important, positive experience that stretches beyond their school building.

We here in Connecticut have a food waste problem that we must address head on. This legislation takes the efforts around food waste composting and brings it to our most formative environmental stewards: our children. I can think of no better way to help our students understand their environmental impact than by using the everyday experience of school meals to encourage their participation in this pilot program. Allowing school districts to engage children in this program will have multiple, positive results. Our schools will engage in a worthwhile, impactful action of eliminating enormous amounts of food waste from our garbage stream while also inviting our children to be part of an educational solution. The pilot program will address food waste in our schools and establish an

educational opportunity for communities to address a needed environmental change in behavior. The change in behavior can have a ripple effect for our children; helping them make the connection between their small actions to the larger, long-term benefit to the world around them.

I am particularly encouraged by the language of the bill which seeks to develop guidelines concerning the implementation of a composting station program at schools. As mentioned earlier, this visible, interactive opportunity that allows children to be part of the food waste solution is a wonderful example of teaching by action. The simple effort of discarding food waste in a way that is environmentally sound helps our children feel included in something that benefits, not only their learning community, but the larger world that they will one day inherit.